

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PGOV, PEPR, CY

SUBJECT:ROLE OF ARCHBISHOP CHRYSOSTOMOS

REF: NICOSIA 629

1. DEPARTMENT HAS FOLLOWED WITH INTEREST REPORTS OF
CHRYSOSTOMOS' RECENT MOVES AND STATEMENTS SEEMINGLY AIMED
AT MOBILIZING THE CHURCH AS A POLITICAL FORCE IN CYPRUS AND
AT FASHIONING FOR HIMSELF A POLITICAL ROLE ON A PAR WITH
THAT OF THE PRESIDENT. WE HAD ASSUMED, OF COURSE, THAT HE
MIGHT AT SOME POINT SEEK TO EMULATE MAKARIOS AND CONTEND FOR
THE POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECCLESIASTICAL LEADERSHIP OF GREEK
CYPRUS, BUT THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH HE HAS DONE SO HAS BEEN
SOMEWHAT UNEXPECTED. IN THIS REGARD, BOTH THE TONE AND THE
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SUBSTANCE OF CHRYSOSTOMOS' MARCH 6 ELEFTHEROTIPIA INTERVIEW
(REFTEL) ARE STRIKING--HIS PUBLICIZING HIS PERSONAL INTER-
VENTION WITH THE EGYPTIANS, HIS HARD LINE ON NEGOTIATIONS,
AND HIS CLEAR WARNING THAT THE CHURCH WILL TAKE OVER SHOULD
THE STATE FALTER.

2. IN TERMS OF EFFORTS TO FOSTER A RESUMPTION OF PRODUCTIVE

INTERCOMMUNAL NEGOTIATIONS CHRYSOSTOMOS' INTRANSIGENCE ON THE SUBSTANCE OF A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN. GIVEN THE ARCHBISHOP'S STATURE AND UNDOUBTED POPULAR INFLUENCE, PUBLIC OPINION MAY BE SO CONDITIONED BY SUCH PRO-

NOUNCEMENTS THAT KYPRIANOU MAY FIND IT POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE--REGARDLESS OF THE MERITS--TO DO ANYTHING OTHER THAN REJECT THE UPCOMING TERRITORIAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS OUT-OF-HAND. WE HAVE ALSO NOTED CHRYSOSTOMOS' OPEN INVITATION TO THE SOVIET UNION TO BECOME MORE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE CYPRUS ISSUE. IN THE SOMEWHAT LONGER TERM, PERHAPS, CHRYSOSTOMOS' ACTIVE CULTIVATION OF POPULAR SUPPORT MAY WELL FORCE KYPRIANOU--IN THE INTERESTS OF SHEER POLITICAL SURVIVAL--TO ADOPT INCREASINGLY EXTREME (AND ANTI-AMERICAN) POSITIONS BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. PARTICULARLY WITH CLERIDES' RECENT WITHDRAWAL OF SUPPORT, KYPRIANOU MUST BE DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT WHAT REMAINS OF HIS POLITICAL BASE WILL BE RAPIDLY AND PERHAPS INEXORABLY UNDERCUT.

3. WE ARE, IN ADDITION, DISTURBED THAT A MAN OF CHRYSOSTOMOS' STATURE AND INFLUENCE SHOULD SEEK TO REVIVE THE OLD ACCUSATION THAT THE U.S. FOMENTED THE 1974 COUP AND BROUGHT ON THE TURKISH INTERVENTION AS A MEANS OF IMPOSING OUR OWN SELF-SERVING "SOLUTION" TO THE CYPRUS PROBLEM. ESPECIALLY IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT, WITH THE ASSIDUOUS EFFORTS THAT WE HAVE BEEN AND ARE MAKING TO STIMULATE REASONABLE AND PRO-SECRET

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DUCTIVE NEGOTIATIONS, SUCH A RESUSCITATION OF ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT IS DISTINCTLY UNHELPFUL.

4. THE QUESTION ARISES AS TO WHETHER WE CAN OR SHOULD DO ANYTHING SPECIFICALLY TO ENCOURAGE MORE HELPFUL MESSAGES FROM THE ETHNARCH'S PULPIT. WE WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY NICOSIA'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. VANCE

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